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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D. C. 20520

September 7, 1978

INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS RESEARCH  
(IC/FAR)

MEMORANDUM FOR: IC/FAR Representatives

SUBJECT : Department of State Review and Clearance of  
Government-Sponsored Foreign Affairs Research

Attached for your information is a copy of Department of State Airgram No. A-2903 dated August 16, 1978. This Airgram was sent to All Diplomatic and Consular Posts as a current reminder of the purpose and limits of the sensitivity review function, the projects which are subject to review, and how posts are involved in the review process.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
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**AIRGRAM** 1780128-2239

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TO: ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS

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FROM: DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DATE:

E.O. 11652:

N/A

TAGS:

PRES

SUBJECT:

Department of State Review and Clearance of  
Government-Sponsored Foreign Affairs Research

REF:

The following describes the Department of State Research Council (DSRC), the purpose and limits of the sensitivity review function, the projects which are subject to review, and how posts are involved in the review process.

This information is provided as a current reminder to posts and as a reference for them when they are asked by the DSRC to comment on or approve proposed Government-sponsored research projects.

I. AUTHORIZATION AND ORGANIZATION OF RESEARCH REVIEW FUNCTION

A. Research Review procedures have been in effect since 1965 when the Secretary of State established the Department of State Research Council (DSRC) pursuant to a Presidential request that the Secretary "establish effective procedures...to assure the propriety of Government-sponsored social science research in the area of foreign policy" to the end that such research would not "adversely affect United States foreign relations."

B. The DSRC is chaired by the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research and is composed of the Director of the Policy Planning Staff, the Legal Adviser, and, as appropriate, representatives of the regional and

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functional bureaus. It is supported by the Office of External Research, Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

C. Formal procedures for the research review function were revised earlier this year. Key points are summarized here for the information of all Posts.

II. PURPOSE AND LIMITS OF REVIEW

A. The DSRC does not concern itself with in-house research or with Government-sponsored research in the physical and life sciences.

B. The DSRC reviews research projects only for the purpose of avoiding adverse effects on U.S. foreign relations. The review assesses foreign relations sensitivity with respect to such factors as auspices, subject matter, extent and nature of field research, and classification. It does not judge method, value, cost, or any other aspect of a project (although informal suggestions may always be made in the course of processing proposals). Sponsoring agencies are under no obligation to accept any recommendations other than those based on an assessment of risk to foreign relations, and in all cases, such risks are weighed against the value of the research project to the U.S. Government.

C. Because the sponsoring agency is the best judge of the value of a proposal to its own mission, its views are carefully considered. If the DSRC questions the propriety of any research project, it consults with the sponsoring agency before making a final determination.

D. In general, the objective is to maintain flexibility, to exercise only necessary controls, and to promote research rather than hinder it.

III. PROJECTS SUBJECT TO REVIEW AND CLEARANCE

A. All foreign affairs research projects sponsored by military and foreign affairs agencies that at any stage involve foreign travel or contact with foreign nationals in the United States or abroad, must be submitted for review. Such other projects as the sponsoring agency determines may have potential adverse affects on U.S. foreign relations should also be submitted for review.

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B. Domestic agencies determine on the basis of potential sensitivity which of their foreign affairs research projects are submitted for review.

C. Grants of the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Institutes of Health, as well as grants awarded under the Fulbright-Hays program or the National Defense Education Act, are exempt from DSRC review.

D. Each agency is asked to keep the DSRC informed about continuing foreign affairs research programs carried out by research organizations receiving principal support from the agency. After consultation with an agency, the DSRC may ask to review specific projects. In cases where such research organizations are not required to clear their research plans or projects with sponsoring agencies, the DSRC does not require review of specific projects. However, agencies are asked to keep the DSRC informed of all foreign affairs research projects undertaken as part of these programs.

E. The DSRC does not review grants to academic institutions for general purposes (such as expansion of facilities, faculty, or curriculum). Agencies are, however, asked to keep the DSRC informed about such grants if any funds are to be used to support foreign affairs research by the recipient institution.

#### IV. POST INVOLVEMENT IN REVIEW PROCESS

A. In the course of the DSRC review process, posts are notified by State or, in some cases, by the sponsoring agency, of proposed projects which will involve contact in their areas of responsibility. This notification will often be accompanied by a request for comment and/or concurrence by the post on the project. Note that all comments should be made in accordance with the limits stated in II.B. above.

B. Since as indicated in section III above not all projects require DSRC clearance, there may be cases where an agency will inform a post of a proposed project direct, or a post will learn of a project through non-Government channels. If a post believes it advisable that any such project be cleared through official DSRC

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channels it should so inform the Department.

C. According to approved procedures, the Department has 15 days from the date of receipt of a project proposal to complete its review and notify the agency of the action taken. Extenuating circumstances sometimes require that action be expedited. Posts are requested to respond to Department requests for comment or approval by PRIORITY cable unless otherwise specified.

D. Please caption all communications regarding DSRC review LIMDIS-Research and use the PRES TAG along with appropriate regional and subject TAGS.

CHRISTOPHER, ACTING

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